

a well regulated society, that is a just government, so far from infringing, establishes and extends our liberty. In a state of nature, or before the establishment of a society, if such a state ever can be found, there is no liberty; for there are no laws. All laws and regulations presuppose the establishment of society; they flow from the intercourse which they regulate, and experience has proved their utility, before they are publicly recognized. To seek for liberty, even in the first stages of society, is to seek for a calm in the midst of a tempest. Are the barbarians free who act by the caprice of the moment, who are governed by their passions and the cravings of their appetites? He then who will take the trouble to reflect, must clearly perceive, that without society we cannot enjoy liberty. What I possess another may take away; my freedom depends not so much on my own restraints as upon the restraints of others in respect to me. Now in a good government these restraints are the laws—and what do I lose or surrender by becoming obedient to these laws? Nothing: for by them my liberty is extended and secured. We do not enjoy what another may take away—and what is secure in a rude society? but civil liberty cannot be taken away by any individual, for we have the strength of the whole society on our side. The restraints therefore imposed by a good government are only the sovereignty of good laws, the restraints of sound principles, and the commands of duty.

The word liberty has been so much prostituted that we are in danger of losing its true meaning;